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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR KHALILZAD AND SYG DISCUSS GEORGIA AND PERSONNEL ISSUES

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1.(S) SUMMARY. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told Ambassador Khalilzad on October 1, that Ban has sent his SRSG for Georgia Johan Verbeke to consult with the Georgians, including the separatist leaders in Abkhazia. The SYG proposed this to Russian FM Lavrov in a one-on-one meeting on the margins of the UNGA General Debate. Ban hopes that this will be sufficient to secure a technical rollover for UNOMIG. Lavrov said he would discuss the suggestion with Russian PM Putin and President Medvedev, and give Ban an answer quickly. If Russia rejected the offer, Ban said he was considering appealing to the U.S. to issue the visas for an Arria-format meeting with the de facto leaders to ensure a smooth continuation of the UNOMIG mission. Ban also said he would attend a high-level dinner the evening before the opening of the October 15 Geneva talks on Georgia, and he asked for substantive U.S. input on the format of the talks. Khalilzad and Ban also discussed personnel matters for the Western Sahara, Kosovo, UNCTAD, and UNAIDS. End Summary.

GEORGIA

12. (S) UN SYG Ban Ki Moon told Ambassador Khalilzad in an October 1 meeting that he had discussed the extension of the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in a bilateral meeting on the margins of the General Debate. Lavrov had been tough during the first part of the meeting with all advisors present, but in a follow on one-on-one with the SYG, Lavrov had been more open to considering the SYG's views. Ban told Lavrov he wanted a 3-4 month technical rollover of the UNOMIG mandate set to expire on October 15, with no changes to the name or mandate.

Lavrov said he had no problem with the rollover. However, without directly mentioning the Arria meeting, he said there needed to be contact with the Abkhaz government prior to taking a decision. The SYG suggested to Lavrov that Georgia SRSG Johan Verbeke, who is currently in Georgia, consult with the South Ossetia and Abkhaz de facto leaders during his trip and report back to the Security Council, as an alternative to their appearance at a meeting. According to Ban, Lavrov said he thought he could support the idea. Lavrov told Ban he would consult with PM Putin and President Medvedev on whether the Russians could accept this alternative, and report back within a couple of days.

13. (S) Ban told Khalilzad he would consider making a personal plea to the U.S. to issue visas for an Arria-format meeting, if the Russians rejected his alternative suggestion, and if

it appeared that an Arria-format meeting would ensure a clean rollover of the UNOMIG mandate. Ambassador Khalilzad told Ban it would not be easy for the U.S. to agree to issue visas, and urged Ban to use all of his cards, such as the Geneva meeting and Verbeke's possible role, to obtain Russian agreement for a technical rollover.

14. (S) COMMENT. With the UNOMIG consultations set for October 9 in the Security Council, we will need to be prepared on next steps. If the Russians reject Ban's alternative approach, we will face the choice of bucking up the Europeans not to allow the Security Council to invite the enclave representatives and keeping the pressure on the Russians with the risk of losing UNOMIG, or look for a compromise with the Russians to secure a clean UNOMIG extension. End Comment.

15. (S) Discussing the October 15 Geneva talks on Georgia, Ban said he had agreed to attend a opening dinner on the evening prior to the opening of the talks. French Foreign Minister Kouchner (as EU President), EU High Representative Javier Solana, and Finnish Foreign Minister Stubb (as OSCE Chairman in Office) would be the other attendees. There would be no representatives from Russia, Georgia or the enclaves. There would be a press conference prior to the dinner in which the four would lay out their expectations for the talks and understanding of next steps. The senior-level representatives would not participate in the October 15 meetings. Ban told Khalilzad he would be interested in further U.S. views on the format and substance of the Geneva meetings.

Personnel Matters: Western Sahara, Kosovo, UNCTAD, UNAIDS

16. (C) Turning to UN personnel issues, the SYG confirmed that U/SYG Lynn Pascoe would travel to Morocco to act as a "bridge mediator" for the Western Sahara, at the request of the Moroccans, and that Christopher Ross would be appointed after 1-1.5 months. At Moroccan insistence to compensante for the Van Walsum departure, the SYG also agreed to replace his SRSG for the Western Sahara, Julian Harston, at the beginning of December. The Moroccans wanted him removed immediately, but the SYG refused.

17. (C) On Kosovo, Ambassador Khalilzad raised the issue of an American PDSRSG again, emphasizing that it is important for the PDSRSG to have legitimacy among the Kosovars. Khalilzad said that if Ban felt he could not name an American, then the U.S. would ask him to consider leaving the position vacant, but to appoint an American to be Chief of Staff to the SRSG. Ban was attracted to this scenario and agreed to consider it.

18. (C) Ambassador Khalilzad raised the candidacy of Gerry Anderson for the position of Deputy Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Ban said that the decision would be made by UNCTAD SYG Supachai, who had an internal candidate in mind. However, Ban said he had asked Supachai to put the appointment on hold, pending further consultations with the U.S. and Europeans. Ban understood that the position had historically gone to a representative of a developed country. He suggested to Supachai that she try and enlist our support for her preferred candidate before making a decision.

19. (C) SYG Ban told Ambassador Khalilzad that World Health Organization Director-General Chan would present him with two candidates for the position of UNAIDS Executive Director, and that one of them would be Deputy Executive Director Michel Sidibe.

Khalilzad